Synopsis of the Thesis Entitled

Gender Inequality in the Select Novels of Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai, and Sudha Murthy : A Comparative Study.

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Introduction :-

There are plants, animals, other living things and animate objects in the universe, but the human being is considered as the supreme creation of nature. Man is being endowed with some abilities which other living beings do not possess. Man and woman are two forms of divine energy. They are created to complete each other. There are biological and psychological differences in man and woman. Generally, men are considered physically stronger while women are more delicate and silent. Due to this and other differences both are given different roles to play and they are even treated distinctly in our society.

According to the ancient religious literature in India, man and woman are the child of Lord Brahma, the Creator. In the mythological references, the woman was referred as the 'Shakti' or powerhouse of the universe. On different occasions, when the Gods were tortured by evils or demons, the incarnation of power that is female Goddess saved the universe. Goddess Mahishasur Mardini, Goddess Durga killed Mahishasur and Chand Munda respectively. While Lakshmi and Saraswati are Goddesses of wealth and knowledge.

In the course of time, the tables were turned. The status of woman in our society undergone a sea change. The condition of women, the so called 'shakti' was totally changed. The Goddess of ancient times now became an object of exploitation by male dominated society. Our religious convictions make woman a Goddess but unfortunately we fail to recognize her as a human being. Our society possesses a double standard attitude towards women. Our thoughts and actions are totally different. On other side we worship Goddesses but we exploit girls and women.

Gender Inequality :-

In a broad sense, gender inequality is a complex issue. When we utter the word 'gender inequality' one may feel that it is related with women only but that is not the case. It is concerned with men and women alike. According to Wikipedia, "Gender inequality is the idea and situation that women and men are not equal. Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals wholly or partly due to their gender". English Encyclopedia says, "Gender inequality is the difference in the status, power and prestige of women and men have in group, collectivities and societies". So gender inequality is a concept related with men and women alike.

When we try to find out origin of gender inequality, we must understand that gender and sex are two different concepts. As English Encyclopedia mentions gender is, "Social expectations about behaviour regarded as appropriate for the member of each sex. Gender does not refer to the physical attributes in terms of which men and women differ, but to socially formed traits of masculinity and feminity." In short, sex is natural characteristic of human being and gender is a man made concept.

However when we go through various data available about gender equality and discrimination we will find that women are far behind than men in various fields of life. On the other hand women are exploited, degraded, violated and discriminated in their homes and outside world. This type of discrimination is easily seen in Indian society.

In our society we can find some causes of gender discrimination. The root cause of gender inequality is patriarchal system deeply rooted in Indian society. Our religious beliefs have made this system a legal and valid one. As

Manu, the Hindu law giver says, "Women are supposed to be in the custody of their father when they are children, they must be under the custody of their husband when married and under the custody of their son in old age or as widows. In any circumstances she should not be allowed to assert herself independently." This is the real status of women in India, no matter she is a Hindu, a Muslim or belong to any other religion.

There are some issues where we can find gender inequality extensively existing in our society. They can be summarised as, extreme poverty, lack of education, less nourishment to girls, lack of employments, lack of awareness, social attitude, social customs. There are some other aspects of such inequality in estrangement between woman and other male members in family, marriage and divorce, physical harassment, dowry, pre-marital, extra-marital relationships these are some major forms of inequality on the basis of gender.

Indian English Literature and Gender Inequality :-

After the independence India has made progress in various fields of life. In present days, Indian writing in English has acquired a great significance. As the global language English has become an easy medium of expression. Indians are using the English language as a medium of creative expression. The women novelists have put an indelible mark in the literary world.

The prominent Indian women writers writing in English highlighted the issues, problems and experiences of contemporary Indian society. They have focused their writing on women and their world and discussed about the deprivation and suffering inflicted upon women discriminately. These women writers include Kamla Markandaya, Ruth Prawar Jhabwala, Gita Mehta, Gita

Hariharan, Namita Gokhale, Shobha De, Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee, Manju Kapur, Arundhati Roy etc. All these writers have depicted the struggle of female protagonists against patriarchal society, male dominated attitude of society, traditional order and system and gender inequality.

Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai, Sudha Murthy and Gender Inequality :-

Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy delineate the domestic disharmony in traditional Indian families and the suffering of women in a patriarchal world. In all critical situation it is the 'Woman' who has to suffer badly. This suffering is deeply rooted in various types of inequalities found between man and woman in our society. The root cause of these inequalities is 'gender inequality'.

Jai Nimbkar

Jai Nimbkar , the eldest daughter of Dinkar Karve and Iravati Karve, was born in 1932 at pune. She has contributed greatly to the literary world by writing fiction, short stories, articles, etc. Nibmkar is one among the eminent feminist writers who delineates feminism and the issues related with gender inequality.

In the novel *Temporary Answers* (1974) the protagonist Vineeta suffers from the emptiness in her life after the sudden death of her husband Nagendra. Afterwards she has to face various problems due to the prevailing socio-cultural

condition in India. As a widow, she is considered as a social outcast. The novel highlights the theme of gender inequality between the sexes and marriage relations.

A Joint Venture (1988) has a simple story of a couple , Jyoti and Ram. The novel focuses on an intense inner conflict in Jyoti. Ram is a businessman and wants greater success in trade. On the other hand , Jyoti seeks the natural happiness of life as a wife , mother and friend. Jyoti gets hurt by self- centered decisions made by Ram. Women's assertion of their identity and obstacles in this process is a common factor in Jai Nibmkar's novels.

The novel *Come Rain* (1993) highlights the psychology of a foreign bride in Indian Family through the character of Ann. She is a victim of patriarchal norms and age old matriarchy of mother-in-laws.

All the three novels are replete with various incidents which are direct or indirect result of gender inequality.

Anita Desai

Anita Desai born on 24 June, 1937 at Mussoorie. She is a well known Indian writer. Her novels focus on the tortured , tormented, trodden image of women and the struggle of women against the male dominated world.

The novels *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) and *Voices in the City* (1965) deal with depressed housewives in altogether different way. In *Cry, the Peacock*, Maya-the protagonist has to suffer as her husband can't understand her various needs while in *Voices in the City*, Monisha, suffers due to husband's insensibility as well as the cruel nature of mother-in-law.

In the novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975), Desai presents the predicament of a married women who wants to win over the difficulties and sufferings of her life.

The novel *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) , takes place in a small village. This is a story of Uma and Arun. Uma an older women who is unmarried and no one cares about her future. She works hard in home and serves the old parents. On the other hand, a lot of efforts are taken to ensure Arun's education and future life. Because he is the male member of the family.

Sudha Murthy

Sudha Murthy is born on 19th August 1950 in Shiggaon in Karnatka. She is a well known author in Kannada and English language. She has written novels that promote her views on feminism. She writes about women's struggle, problems and other feminine aspects.

Mahashweta (2000) is a heart touching story about Anupama , a poor but beautiful girl. Dr. Anand falls in love with her and gets married to her. Suddenly she discovers a white patch on her foot and learns that she has leukoderma. Afterwards her life gets totally changed and she has to suffer a lot of problems in the course of time.

Dollar Bahu (2003) tells the story of NRI marriages. It depicts the condition of Indian wife and NRI wife. The mother-in-law thinks that Indian daughter-in-law is not as good as NRI daughter-in-law. The novel highlights man woman relationship and various aspects related to women in male dominated society.

Gently Falls the Bakula (2008) is a story of marriage that losses its ultimate aim and becomes a failure as a marriage. The novel tells us about Shrikant and Shrimati. Shrikant works relentlessly and achieves success in IT company. While Shrimati gives up her academic aspirations and becomes husband's shadow, only fulfilling her duties as a corporate leader's wife. In the process she losses her own identity.

The novel *House of Cards* (2013) deals with the story of Mridula and Sanjay who settled in Bangalore after marriage. Sanjay is a doctor and in the course of time he earns a lot of money by corrupt practice. When Mridula comes to know about this truth, she has to face discontentment in married life despite a love marriage. This intricately woven novel explores human relationship and holds up a mirror to our society.

Objectives of the Research Work :-

The purpose of the study may be stated as follows -

- To point out the issues related to gender inequality in Indian English literature with a special reference in the selected novels of Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy.
- To compare the theme of gender bias, gender gap or gender inequality in the selected novels of Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy.
- To investigate the impact of gender inequality on the overall development of women.
- To study and draw inferences which may offer a fresh perspective to the topic of thesis.

- To analyse and interpret the textual and conceptual essence of gender inequality in the selected novels of Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy.
- To study Indian women's insecurities and struggle in accordance with social, historical, cultural, religious atmosphere of Indian society.
- To expose the anxiety of common woman towards her family and her journey between hopes and despairs.
- To point out exploitation of women through the novels of Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy.
- To express the feelings of physically tortured and mentally perturbed female protagonists against the patriarchal system .
- To understand the depictions of feminine issues in the novels of Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy, which are highly suggestive to their concerns about modern Indian woman.

Problems to be Investigated :-

The aim of the present research work is to compare the theme of gender inequality in the selected novels of Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy. The present research will explore the meaning of gender equality, gender inequality, the difference between gender, sex, various reasons for female gender gap or inequality and how we can remove this inequality from our society.

Indian constitution has granted rights of equality to everyone, still women are not able to enjoy the freedom about their existence, desires and expectations. Any type of law cannot compel a husband to handle his wife in a way or the other

in the four walls of house. Hence, it is very imperative to change the mind set of male dominated society.

Assumptions :-

- Across the world in all cultures and traditions women are considered as inferior to men.
- From ancient time gender inequality persists and this is a great obstacle in the development of women.
- In the patriarchal society, the matriarchal society has been exploited, tortured and silenced.
- Gender equality is a multidimensional human right that has been fully extended to women.
- Literature is a medium which can be a force for making changes in individuals and societies about gender inequality.
- Being a woman, Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy, bring out the inequalities faced by females in male dominated society.
- We must identify women's contribution in the overall progress of nation.
- Gender inequality is one of the major social problems in developing countries like India.
- It is universally accepted that the equal role of man and woman is essential for the social, cultural and economical development of India.

Research Methodology :-

The present research work is the qualitative research i.e. a social science research which helps us to understand social life. The qualitative research methods like implication, interpretation and critical analysis will be used for successful completion of the research work. The research will use the descriptive and analytical method for the proposed study. The researcher would follow the MLA style of documentation. Even the interviews of the writers and their literary work will be used in the process of this work. The methodology will mostly include the library work that can be specified as below :-

- The study of available original works of the authors as primary source.
- Analytical study of selected novels of Jai Nimbkar , Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy.
- Analytical study of all critical works on Jai Nimbkar , Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy.
- The study of feminist approach.
- It also takes into account broad streams like history , sociology, psychology, religion and economy.

Scope and Limitation of the Study:-

The present study will be based on the following texts as primary source:-

- *Temporary Answers* [1974], *A Joint Venture* [1988], *Come Rain* [1993] by Jai Nimbkar.
- *Cry, the Peacock* [1963], *Voices in the City* [1965] *Where Shall We Go This Summer ?* [1975] by Anita Desai.
- *Mahashweta* [2000], *Dollar Bahu* [2003], *Gently Falls the Bakula* [2008] *House of Cards* [2013] by Sudha Murthy.

However , the critical material available on Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai, and Sudha Murthy, and their literary work will be used as secondary sources.

Research Plan / Plan of Thesis :-

The tentative chapter scheme of the thesis is as follows:-

Chapter I : Introduction –

The first chapter will be introduction to the thesis. This will include historical background of the Indian English novels, women novelist, concept of gender equality and gender inequality and various terms, issues related to the research work.

Chapter II :-

The second chapter will include the background study of the theme of gender inequality as reflected in the literature from ancient times to modern period in the review of literature.

Chapter III :-

The third chapter will be on in depth study of the theme of gender inequality in the novels of Jai Nimbkar.

Chapter IV :-

The fourth chapter will be on in depth study of the theme of gender inequality in the novels of Anita Desai.

Chapter V:-

The fifth chapter will be on in depth study of the theme of gender inequality in the novels of Sudha Murthy.

Chapter VI :-

The sixth chapter will be a comparison about the conclusion drawn from the analysis of the theme of gender inequality found in above mention writers.

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